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Celebrating 60 Years and Wild As Ever!

Tucson, AZ (August 24, 2012) – The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum was founded on Labor Day in 1952 and will celebrate its 60th anniversary year with a variety of new exhibits and programs.

New exhibits include the Great Blue Heron/Cienega exhibit, the *Diamonds of the Desert, Collection* planned to coincide with the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show, and the new Warden Aquarium, featuring *Rivers to the Sea*, opening in December.

“The Museum’s 60th anniversary year is not only a celebration of what the Museum has achieved in the past but also a reminder that it continues to evolve with new programs and new exhibits,” states Craig Ivanyi, the Museum’s Executive Director. “The new Animal Keeper Animal Interaction Program is just one new initiative planned for this 60th anniversary year.”

The new Animal Keeper Interaction program, occurring daily, provides an opportunity for visitors to watch as keepers work with animals during feedings, perform training exercises, or implement enrichment activities. Visitors will be able to check the “*Plan Your Day*” board at the entrance patio for times and locations throughout the grounds.

The new Great Blue Heron/Cienega exhibit will showcase one of the largest birds native to the Sonoran Desert region and can be found in both salt- and fresh-water habitats. The bird was

rescued and rehabilitated in Washington State where caretakers believed that it had been plucked from its nest by a raptor.

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum will unveil its new Warden Aquarium in December. The aquarium's exhibition, "*Rivers to the Sea*", will highlight the roles of the region's rivers, including the mighty Colorado, and the Gulf of California. Two galleries are planned: one highlighting the region's freshwater rivers and aquatic life and the other featuring the Sea of Cortez and representative sea life. Primary funding for the new exhibition was generously provided by the Bert W. Martin Foundation.

The galleries will encompass over 1,100 square feet and include 14 tanks displaying a variety of fresh- and salt-water animal species. Some of the Museum's numerous aquatic conservation projects impacting many aquatic species will be highlighted in the galleries.

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is one of the nation's leading outdoor, living museums, featuring more than 230 animals and 1,200 varieties of desert plants. Its mission is to inspire people to live in harmony with the natural world by fostering love, appreciation, and understanding of the bi-national Sonoran Desert region. The museum is located at 2021 N. Kinney Road, in Tucson Mountain Park adjacent to Saguaro National Park (West). It is open daily year round with operating hours varying by season. Call (520) 883-2702 or visit www.desertmuseum.org for more information.

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